

Second Thessalonians

Bible Commentary 2021

by

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2 Thessalonians 1

1:1-5

The Thessalonian church endured afflictions and Paul made it clear there was a purpose for their suffering. He pointed to a spiritual process which took place in their lives. He described this process: "that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God".

Does this mean what Christ did for us at Calvary was not sufficient? There is no contradiction here. What Christ did for us is completely sufficient to remove our sins and the penalty of our sins. However, forgiveness of sins is the beginning of a process of sanctification. We are sanctified by faith in the gospel and continue this process by abiding in the gospel and cooperating with the work of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives. The Lord continues to apply the gospel to our lives every day. The gospel was accomplished once and for all but the application of the gospel is a daily process which the Holy Spirit applies to us.

We were saved, we are being saved, and we will be saved. It is hard for us to wrap our mind around this because we are not used to seeing things from the perspective of eternity. We think in terms of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. We cannot see ourselves the way the Lord does from heaven.

Paul gave thanks for them and acknowledged that their faith was growing and their love toward one another abounded. These qualities flow from real Christians. Christians will always have faith towards God and love for one another. There is no escaping this. It is a built-in, basic principle that Christians exhibit faith towards God and as a result will love one another.

Paul gloried in this church. Paul told other churches about the Thessalonians, and used them as an example to other churches of how to continue in faith and love while suffering affliction.

For a Christian suffering has context. There is a purpose in suffering. Suffering is not wasted. Suffering is used by God to transform us into what he designed us to be. We can trust God in the furnace of affliction to carry us and get us where we need to be. God is good, he is faithful, and he loves us more than we could ever comprehend.

1:6

The Thessalonian church endured persecution by the religious and secular world. This is the pattern we see in the life of Christ and the church. Paul gave us a glimpse of an important truth. God will take care of the people who persecute us. It is a righteous thing that God will take care of them. How will he deal with them? He will recompense tribulation to them. God's wrath will come on the world that persecutes Israel, the church, and those in the kingdom. God's wrath is coming.

This wrath may seem like it takes a long time, but when it comes it will happen suddenly and with devastation. Sudden destruction will come on the world. Scriptures warn us repeatedly about the sudden desolation of the wicked. Read **Proverbs 3:25**, **Isaiah 47:11**, **1 Thessalonians 5:3**. How shall we then live? We should be patient and endure whatever affliction the world piles on. We should not try to assert ourselves but give place for the Lord to deal with our persecutors. Instead, our part is to humble ourselves and allow the Lord to defend us, protect us, and provide for us. He is more than able to do this. We must be still and see the salvation of the Lord which he will work on our behalf.

1:7-10

These early Christians were troubled by persecution from the religious establishment and from the unbelieving government and society they were surrounded with. However, Paul invited them to rest with him. How could Paul rest? Because he knew the Lord Jesus would return and deal with those who persecuted the church. He knew the Lord Jesus would return to the earth.

The return of the Lord is in front of us, and not far away. The Lord Jesus is described as coming in "*flaming fire*" and "*taking vengeance*". The first time Jesus came to the earth it was as a suffering Savior. The next time he comes to this earth it will be in wrath and power. His enemies will fall at his feet and be crushed underneath his feet.

The Lord will return to punish the unbelieving world. The world will never acknowledge the justice of God's wrath because of their pride, unbelief, and stubbornness. But God is just. His wrath is just. He will consume all of his enemies with unquenchable fire.

Those who trust in the Lord Jesus as Savior have an invitation to rest. God will take care of the world. It is our place to rest in the Lord and to wait patiently for him to act.

1:11-12

One goal of the Christian is that the Lord Jesus Christ be glorified in our lives. How can we accomplish this? One way I know for sure is to walk, live, and stand by faith. What do I mean by this?

For me, it starts with putting my faith in the gospel which is the finished, completed work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. (**1 Corinthians 15:1-4**)

We believe in our heart that Jesus died for us, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. We confess with our mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and we are saved. (**Romans 10:9-10**). By believing and confessing we simply agree with God that what he says is the truth. God is true whether or not we agree with him, but when we believe and agree then we can benefit from what Jesus accomplished for us.

This is the beginning of allowing the Lord Jesus Christ to be glorified in our lives. In the context of these scriptures I also see that part of Jesus being glorified in our lives is when we continue steadfastly to trust in God during times of persecution, affliction, and hardship. When we continue to give thanks to God no matter how bad our lives get then the Lord Jesus Christ is glorified. Standing firm when our faith is under fire brings glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Another way to glorify Jesus is to constantly remember and believe that God is our provider and he is our protector. You see David repeating these two truths over and over in the book of Psalms. God provides for us. God protects us. You see these two principles in the prayer that the Lord taught his disciples. Give us this day our daily bread. Deliver us from evil. This addresses the basic truth that God is our provider and our protector. If you cannot believe these two simple truths then your life will not bring glory to Jesus. As a matter of fact, if you live like everything depends upon you then you will actually do the opposite and drive people away from having faith in Christ.

It all comes back to faith. Having faith in God for salvation. Having faith in God that he is sovereign over the events of our life. And having faith you will be provided for and protected by God.

My last point is this. Always remember that God is our goal. The Lord Jesus is our prize. He is our reward. He is our inheritance. This is the underlying goal in our life. We do not live for ourselves anymore. We live for the Lord Jesus. He is the goal and prize and reward we point ourselves toward.

2 Thessalonians 2

2:1-2

The context here was that someone was promoting inaccurate or false information about the "*day of Christ*". Paul was reassuring them of the doctrine which he preached about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto him.

Someone tried to convince the Thessalonians that they missed the rapture of the church. However, Paul told them this was not possible because if the rapture had occurred then there would be specific events and specific people rising in world politics.

We can be assured the rapture has not happened. Why? Because there is not yet a man ruling a one world order political system. The church will already be raptured by the time the Antichrist takes control of the world system.

The rapture and the day of Christ were always a point of debate in the church. This is a doctrine which the enemy uses to attack and confuse people with. Why? Because it is what we are looking forward to. The church has prayed for two thousand years that Jesus will come back and God's kingdom will come to this earth. The enemy knows the Lord Jesus will return and establish his kingdom. However, this knowledge does not stop him from trying to supplant and replace God's kingdom with his own version of a new world order.

As time goes on we will continue to hear more and more about a global one world order. This is a sure sign we are getting closer to the return of the Lord and the rapture of the church.

2:3-4

A major symptom of life in the last days is widespread deception. Paul warned us. Let no man deceive you. This was the same exhortation Jesus gave in **Matthew 24:4**. Why this repeated admonishment about deception?

It means there is a time (*which I think we are already entering*) in which it will be nearly impossible to discern between lies and truth. We see this already. Constantly the media repeats lies as truth and truth is retold as if it is a lie. What is dark is called light, and what is light is called darkness. What is evil is called good and what is good is called evil. People do not know anymore up from down or their left from their right.

There will be a falling away. I think this is more than just a religious falling away from the faith, but a falling away from generally known truth. Men will no longer hold the obvious truth, like the difference between men and woman. People are abandoning the obvious truth inherent in nature itself. When we reach this point then we have arrived at a "*falling away*".

There is a specific man in the future that the Bible calls "*the man of sin*". This man is also known as the Antichrist. He will pretend to be another Messiah or Christ. He will deceive the world through manipulating religion, politics, and the economy. He will ride in on a wave of one world unity in religion, politics, and the economy.

This man will have so much pride he will declare himself to be God. This does not seem so far fetched when we already have mega church preachers calling themselves 'gods', and preaching a message of self-worship. Their motto is live your best life now. Can't anyone see how blasphemous this message is?

People will believe in this false Christ. He will convince the world he is their savior. Jesus predicted this man would one day show up and be accepted by the world even as the real Jesus was rejected by the world. However, this man of sin will only have a short season to rule the world. Seven years is not a long time in light of eternity.

2:5-7

It is important to remember what we are taught. Paul asked the question: don't you remember what I told you? Do we remember what we learn? Do we remember past lessons and truths we have learned from the Lord?

Some lessons are more important than others so we need to know what is important to the Lord so we hold on to what the Lord thinks is important. The worldly mega preachers will tell you to remember positive verses that promise wealth and money. But is that what the Lord Jesus considered to be important? Read the word of Jesus himself on the topic of money. We need to remember what the Lord thinks is important. We need to remember mercy, love, humility, justice. These are things which are important to the Lord.

Paul asked them if they could remember what he taught them on the last days. He told them again that there was something in place right now which holds back the final surge of evil which results in the appearance of the Antichrist. What could possibly be holding back that kind of surge of evil? My opinion is that what restrains evil in the world today is the Holy Spirit working through the members of Christ's body the church. Take the church out of the way and what will be the result? It will be the sudden appearance on the world scene of a man who is evil incarnate.

2:8-10

Almost as soon as this wicked man is revealed the world will be destroyed. Seven years is not a long time, but I'm sure the devil will make the most of his little window of time to wreck as much havoc as possible.

The Lord will simply say "poof" and this man will go down. Even the brightness of the return of Christ will destroy this man of sin.

This wicked man will appear with the power of Satan to perform all kind of magic tricks to amaze people. He will perform signs and lying wonders in order to deceive people who do not have a love for the truth. A lot of people today do not have any love for the truth in them.

I pray the Lord always give me a love for the truth. I want to live in the truth, walk in the truth, and agree with the truth even if the truth condemns me. It is so important to run after truth and not let go of it. Everything in this world system we live in will try to separate us from what is true.

In **Philippians 4:8** we are exhorted: "...*whatsoever things are true...think on these things.*" It requires determination and passion to pursue and hold the truth.

Jesus is the truth. He is the way, and the truth, and the life. Let us lay aside all lies and hypocrisy and seek him with all of our heart.

2:11-12

The Bible plainly said here God himself will send strong delusion to cause people to believe the lie. This lie is very specific. For those who do not read the entire Bible in context these verses may cause a lot of problems. An ignorant man could take these verses out of context and blame God that men are damned and go to hell.

Is God unjust? Is he not giving these men what they want? Look closely. These people already chose to reject the truth. They were exposed to the truth. Someone shared the gospel with them, and they rejected the gospel. They rejected that the Lord Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. What is the result? A time comes when God will draw a line in the sand and those who are on the wrong side will no longer be able to escape the choice they already made.

People choose to reject the truth. Sooner or later, in every person's life, they are no longer capable of hearing or comprehending truth any longer. They become lost in their own lies and delusions.

The entire world will be turned over to their depravity and insanity. Men reject the truth and eventually mankind crosses a line as a whole where it can no longer be turned away from the darkness any longer. Then God allows man what man already chose to have: lies, delusions, and darkness.

I pray the Lord will search my heart now and deliver me from every lie and delusion. I pray for God to correct me and rebuke me and help me to stay humble so that I can be taught the truth. I want to have a love of the truth in my heart. I want to love Jesus more than I love myself.

2:13-15

As it is Paul's pattern he gives thanks for the churches and for individual believers. Paul expressed his gratitude for the Thessalonians. He gave thanks for them "always", which means as an ongoing part of his prayer life he remembered them and thanked the Lord for them. They were beloved of the Lord. Paul knew that the Lord loved these people, and so he loved them, because Paul loved the Lord. If we love the Lord then we are bound to give thanks for others who love the Lord, and we will also love others who love the Lord. The Lord Jesus is the center of our love for one another. He is worthy of our love, our worship, our affection, our service, and our surrender.

God chose them from the beginning. Isn't that wonderful? God chose us, and so we can rest in his love for us. We have not earned God's love. We did not choose God but he chose us. Praise God that he first loved us. The Holy Spirit is at work in our hearts in a process of sanctifying us. This means he continues each day to set us apart from the world system and from how the natural man thinks and lives. We become more spiritual each day as we listen to and obey the Holy Spirit.

This process begins, continues, and ends with simple faith in the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are saved by believing in the gospel. We continue to be saved each day by the gospel, and we will be saved in the future from this body of death by the truth of the gospel. What is this gospel that is so basic to everything in the Christian life? The gospel is this: Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and

he rose again on the third day. There were many people who were witnesses of the crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We have their testimony today in the Holy Bible. If we reject the truth in scripture we are rejecting God's revelation of who is. How sad for people who claim to know God but reject the scripture. They exalt their own minds and opinions over the plain truth in God's word. Pride makes it impossible for them to trust the gospel. But how simple the gospel is. Jesus died on the cross for our sins. He took our place at Calvary.

We need to stand fast in the gospel. This is the true tradition that Paul delivered to the churches. The tradition we hold to is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2:16-17

Paul placed the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father beside each other. In his mind, they are two persons who exist as one God. Throughout the New Testament we see this pattern that God is Father, God is Son, and God is Holy Spirit. Jesus himself taught us to baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We see this reality again at the baptism of Jesus, and it is all through Paul's letters over and over again. It is difficult for me to understand why people reject this obvious truth in the Bible. It must be because if people reject this about God it takes away something basic of our understanding of who God is, and as a result people get a corrupted version of the gospel message.

We have an eternal comfort and a good hope through grace. It is God's grace that puts our heart at rest. We now have peace with God because of what the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished through his crucifixion, his death, his burial, and his resurrection. It is this finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ that makes peace between us and God. We can now approach God's throne of grace with confidence and can appeal to the Lord on the behalf of ourselves and others.

God wants us to be comforted by the truth of the gospel. It is this deep and eternal comfort in God's love that inspires our good works and words. From this point of inspiration many mighty works were accomplished for the furtherance of God's kingdom and the gospel. Any other motive will fall short. Our goal and purpose is the love of God. Anything less will ultimately not reach the mark and goal found in the grace of God.

2 Thessalonians 3

3:1-3

Paul told the church he prayed for them, and he also asked them to pray for him and his fellow workers. What is Paul's prayer request? That the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified. This is a prayer request that God's word can be preached effectively and that people will come to the saving knowledge of the gospel as a result. However, where the gospel is preached there will always be people who will rise up to oppose and resist the preaching. Paul also prayed that he would be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men. Wicked men are always unreasonable. They are unreasonable because

their lives are built on delusion and lies. They are unreasonable because the way they live does not follow truth and logic so they must resist truth and reason and logic.

Paul said that not all men have faith. Not everyone who is born will believe in God and accept the gospel. Many people will reject the message of the Lord Jesus and suffer the eternal consequences for their choice of unbelief.

Paul turned this sad fact around, however, and reminded them that the Lord is faithful who will establish them in their faith and will keep them from evil. This is the prayer which the Lord Jesus taught his disciples: "*..lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil..*."

We should make this a part of our prayers. God is our protector. We should pray and ask God for and trust in his protection. God is our provider. We pray and ask him and thank him each day for our daily bread. God is our portion. May his name be glorified and magnified. May his kingdom be established upon this earth.

3:4-5

Paul was confident in the Lord that the Thessalonians would follow his instructions. Paul gave them "commands". These are straight forward instructions on how to live the Christian life. He was confident that they would follow this because Paul received his knowledge by revelation from the Lord Jesus. He did not follow some kind of man-made doctrine or teaching. He preached the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He preached Christ Jesus crucified, buried, and risen from the dead on the third day.

Notice Paul prayed that the Lord would direct their heart into the love of God. What does this mean? God's love is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the Christian life. We love God because he first loved us. If we believe in God then we will love our brothers and sisters in Christ. Love and faith go hand in hand.

What is the patient waiting for Christ? Jesus left this earth after his resurrection. He went back to heaven and is now seated at the right hand of God Almighty. The Lord Jesus lives forever to make intercession for us. One day the Lord Jesus will return. He will appear in the clouds over the earth and the church will be called up to meet him in the air. After the conclusion of the seven year tribulation the Lord Jesus will return to the earth and set foot on the Mount of Olives. He will establish his kingdom over all the nations of the earth.

We are patiently waiting for God's kingdom to take over this planet. This is what we pray continually. "*Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.*"

3:6-12

Paul warned them about other Christians in the church. He said there was a type of Christian we should avoid. What type of Christians should we avoid? The word used here is "disorderly". In the context this

word must mean Christians who do not participate in being productive or making a livelihood. They do not have a job. They are unemployed. They are not looking for work.

There are a lot of ways to be employed. Not everyone has to sign up for a paycheck in order to be productive. There are many types of work we can participate in which will help others and provide for ourselves. However, as a general rule of thumb, most of us will go out and find a job and work and earn a paycheck. Notice Paul made this point even more clear by pointing to himself as an example of someone who worked hard to pay his own way. He did not depend on others but worked hard, while preaching, to pay his own way.

What is the purpose of working? The primary benefit of working is so you can buy your own groceries. You can pay your own bills. To fail, at least to try, to find a job is to be disorderly, according to Paul. If you come across someone like this stay clear of them.

3:13-18

Here we have Paul's concluding remarks in this second letter to the Thessalonians. He gave specific instructions on dealing with brethren who do not take this letter to heart. Paul already anticipated that there would be people in the church who disregarded his letter and did not follow his instructions. This is the same attitude Moses and Joshua both had at the end of their lives when they gave their final commands to Israel. They knew Israel would be disobedient and turn aside after other gods. They knew what human nature was like. So did Paul. He knew that people in the church were still just people, like you and me. We need to be admonished to obey God's word. There is always a place for a preacher to exhort and admonish people to be obedient. This is not legalism. This is practical exhortation.

Don't be afraid to rebuke, correct, and exhort people. We all need it. We all have blind spots. We all go astray, like the Psalmist admitted about himself in Psalm 119:176, *"I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments."*

Hide God's word in your heart. Find ways to relate scripture to your every day life. Put it into practice. Remember, apply, and obey God's word. Find brothers and sisters in Christ who will exhort you, correct you, and point out your blind spots. Spiritual growth is not accomplished in solitude. Spiritual growth is accomplished in a community of believers who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

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